

Trishna odyssey ends: crew get warm welcome

From Our Special Correspondent
BOMBAY, Jan. 10. — A tumultuous welcome was given today to the country's first sailing expedition to circumnavigate the globe when it returned home 33 months after it sailed away from Bombay.

Yachts of the Bombay Sailing Association and Navy patrol boats escorted the "Trishna" with its 10-member crew of Army Engineers as it sailed into the Bombay harbour this afternoon.

Indian naval ships blared their foghorns and fired coloured flares into the sky to join the festive reception. The band of the Bombay Engineering Group and Centre played "Swagatani" as the crew led by its 40-year-old skipper, Lt. Col. K.S. Rao, were ceremoniously greeted by Chief of the Army Staff General Krishnaswamy Sundarji and his wife at the Gateway of India here.

Senior Defence officials, including Lt. General Depinder Singh, Southern Command, and Vice-Admiral S. Jain, Flag Officer Commanding, Western Naval Command, sailing enthusiasts, and family members of the crew were

Sappers sail home

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on hand to welcome Trishna and its heroic band of sailors home.

The welcoming party shouted "well done Sappers," "Good to have you back" and "Shabbash" as the Trishna touched the Indian shore.

A special welcome was given to major A.K. Singh, the first handicapped sailor ever to sail around the world. His family was at the jetty to give him a warm welcome.

Major Singh is one of the four members of the crew to have been on the boat throughout its 30,000-nautical-mile voyage around the world.

The yacht's captain, Col. Rao, met his 11-month-old daughter for the first time today. The girl was born in February last year while Col. (then Major) Rao was leading the Army engineers on Trishna. Aptly, his daughter has been named after the yacht, which served her father and his crewmates as their home since September 28, 1985.

AHEAD OF SCHEDULE: Trishna touched the Indian shore at exactly 4.05 p.m. It had completed its journey at least two months ahead of its schedule despite the rough weather it had to brave as it rounded the Cape of Good Hope and further on as well and face close encounters with large whales on the high seas.

The Gateway of India, once the symbol of colonial dominance over India, was gaily decorated and turned

General of Bombay C.P. Thomas was later autographed by the Trishna crew.

Among the dignitaries present today was former Union Minister K.P. Singh Deo who is the patron-in-chief of the organising committee of the expedition. Former Engineer-in-Chief Lt. General P.R. Puri (retd), was also present.

Former Chief of the Army Staff, the Late General A.S. Vaidya, who had flagged off the expedition in September 1985, was missed at today's function. Ironically, General Vaidya had said while bidding farewell to the expedition: "The lucky among us are going to be around to welcome home the adventures."



Top: Trishna sailing. Bottom: The crew: Front row (L to R) Capt R. Basai, Capt S. Shekhar, Maj. K.S. Rao (now Lt. Col), SM (skipper), Capt. C. Bharti, Col. T.P.S. Chowdhury (Team Manager). Rear row: (L to R) Maj. A. Bhattacharya, Lt. N. Ahuja, Maj. S.N. Mathur, Maj. A.K. Singh, SM, Maj. A.P. Singh, SM.

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